

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, June 29, 1880, with transcript

Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. L 904 — 14th St., Washington, Tuesday, June 29th, 1880. Dear May:

Washington is insufferable — thermometer now at half-past eight o'clock in the evening at 85°. I am out all over with that heat-eruption again and I tingle as if I were clothed in a horsehair sacque for my sins. I send these few lines to keep my promise to you and the moment they are finished I shall rush to Dr. Johnson for Salaratue water or something else to make me comfortable.

I enclose a letter received to-day from the Health Officer in re Defective Drainage at the Laboratory.

Mary Horne has got her teeth! They change her entire appearance — of course for the better but she looks quite ill and I wish I could send her off for a change somewhere.

Mr. Tainter and I resolved to make arrangements for the repair of the permanent laboratory before doing anything else and we went there with Mr. Page to have estimates made.

James who should have been in charge was not to be found and the whole place was locked up.

As we came round one corner of the building I saw an arm come out of one of the upper windows and close — to the outer shutter — a coloured person's arm. There was some one in the house! We shouted all over the place for James and called to the person inside to come and open the door. No response anywhere!

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Setting Mr. Tainter and Mr. Page to watch outside so that no one should escape — I crammed myself into the house through one of 2 the basement windows — and searched all the rooms.

The room — from the window of which the black arm protruded — had two doors and both were locked. I knocked at them asking them to be opened. No answer — all still inside. Nothing to be seen through the keyholes. I then went downstairs and helped Mr. Page in. He was to keep guard at one door while I broke open the other if no response came to our summons. Mr. Tainter kept guard outside to prevent escape from the window.

“Is any one in there?” No answer. “Open the door or we will break it open.” No answer.

All this time Mr. Tainter outside was experimenting on his own account. He obtained a long pole and succeeded in adroitly forcing open one of the outside shutters — revealing to his astonished gaze the terrified face of James — the coloured man — as nearly white as fear could make it. Thus discovered he had no resource left but to open the door — revealing to our gaze —

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Mr. Page will have estimates made as speedily as possible and the whole place be put in repair. A simple wire fence will be put all round the property.

I have thoughts of asking Lina and her husband to take care of the property during our absence. What do you think of this?

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Mr. Ormes has been here about the Oriental Co. He proposes to throw Charlie overboard altogether — giving me about the same amount of shares originally offered with this exception that instead of their being given to me I am to pay for the privilege of getting

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them! I am thinking over an answer. I have telegraphed to Charlie but I fear he cannot come.

Called at Pollok's office. Charlie's Patents come out — or I suppose came out to-day. My patent for an Improvement on Charlie's Indication has been allowed — also my patent for Improved Central Office System. I have to-day signed applications for Patents in the countries of South America for the Continental Telephone Co.

My letter is longer than I thought. Time is up and Richard must take this to the Depot. The pictures have all been covered. A dress for you just arrived from Mad. Van Reuth. Richard wants to be remembered to you. Love to Lina and to my little Elsie.

How are you my sweet wife? I feel anxious at receiving no response to my telegram.

May I put baby's name in our Family Bible as Estella Hubbard Bell? Please decide there's a darling.

Your loving husband, Alec.